

Submission

to

The Joint Standing Committee on Treaties Inquiry

concerning

Certain Maritime arrangements – Timor-Leste

Lindy Yeates

Regarding :

“The consequences of termination of the Treaty between Australia and The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste on Certain Maritime Arrangements in the Timor Sea”:

- **I applaud** the governments of Timor-Leste and Australia for confirming to each other their commitment to negotiate permanent maritime boundaries under the auspices of the UN Conciliation Commission.
- **I believe** that the gap in Australia's maritime border with Timor-Leste is denying our impoverished neighbor access to billions of dollars in royalties from oil and gas revenue that is rightfully theirs under international law – dollars they need to rebuild, diversify and put the foundations in place for a strong future. I believe that without Australia's co-operation in closing that gap, Timor-Leste will be bankrupt in the next 10 - 15 years. <http://www.timorseajustice.com/about>. Then we will have a Failed State on our doorstep. This would be a tragedy for the Timorese, an international disgrace for Australia and an opportunity for China - whose businessmen already have significant influence in Timor.
- **I am ashamed** of the behavior of successive Governments of Australia toward the East Timorese since WW11, in particular our negotiating strategies concerning oil and gas in the Timor Sea during 1989, 2002 and 2004.
- **I am concerned** that, when visiting Timor-Leste, no matter where I go, the Timorese people are aware of the oil and gas issue, that Australia is stealing their future; that to be a sovereign nation, they need to have control over their territorial waters. On numerous occasions during my visit in August 2016, I felt ashamed to be Australian and avoided letting people know which country I was from. On my return to Melbourne, I realized that very few Australians I know are aware of how Australians are currently perceived in Timor-Leste and of this issue of injustice in the Timor Sea.
- **I agree** with the Shadow Foreign Minister Tanya Plibersek: “The East Timorese have not asked for charity, they've asked for justice. The people of East Timor were very happy that Australia played an important role in helping the people of East Timor secure their independence from Indonesia, but since then the relationship has come under a great deal of strain, because these people from one of the poorest nations in our region, a tiny country compared with Australia, feel that Australia has deliberately delayed the finalisation of this seabed boundary issue.”
- **I echo the words of Xanana Gusmao** “We ask Australia, through its new Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, as a good neighbour and a leading power in the international community...to honor its obligations by negotiating permanent maritime boundaries with Timor-Leste”. I believe that our international reputation is at stake!
- **I implore the Australian Government to finalize as soon as possible a fair and permanent boundary between Australia and Timor-Leste, using median line principles, in accordance with current International law. I ask that this be done in good faith and as a matter of urgency.**